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ABSTRACT

Social studies teachers can help students develop self- and career awareness by infusing career education into the social studies curriculum. The infusion method of career education is preferred since it can make the content of lessons more relevant for students. In addition, infusion of career education is particularly appropriate in social studies because, more than any other discipline, social studies deals with the movement of society throughout the history of the world and thus with finding one's place in the world of tomorrow. A volunteer committee of teachers and administrators could develop a career education program for infusion into a social studies program. Such as program should include the following objectives: develop heightened self-awareness and self-acceptance, improve decision-making resources and abilities, develop positive attitudes toward work and personal values, clarify the relationship between career and personal goals, and develop character traits necessary for success in a chosen career. The career activities incorporated into the curriculum should include basic job search and money management skills, consideration of the responsibilities accompanying having and raising a family, and the issue of sex bias. A 3-year career education infusion project that incorporated many of these ideas was implemented in the Foxborough Public Schools in Massachusetts. (MN)

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Career Education Infused Into the Social Studies Curriculum

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Career Education Infused Into the Social Studies Curriculum

Year after year, many of our graduates cross the thresholds of our high schools and aimlessly disappear into the competitive and confusing world of work. Their purpose in life is merely to sustain themselves, often with only a flicker of hope for a "lucky break". "Job satisfaction" and "fulfillment of one's potential" only surface as desirable goals after establishment in a job that results in frustration and boredom. Still, other graduates go to college, a few with goals, but many hide within college walls to prevent having to make decisions or because they "do not know what else to do". Many educators dream, as we do, of a graduating class rushing out our doors with dreams and goals of their own, because this time we helped them look at themselves and the world around them more clearly than they have ever seen before. This article suggests that one way to prevent their blurred vision is to give them a career education that is relevant, realistic, and rewarding. We live in a society where we are expected to work and preparation for that work is a necessity (Hoyt, 1976).

Career education begins at an early age, when literature makes children aware that economic rewards are a result of work (Westerberg & Sander, 1982). It is not uncommon today for an elementary school child to discover the world of work by spending a day at the office, factory, or store where a parent is employed. Sadly enough, too many of today's children also know the repercussions of the loss of work by the family breadwinner. When children reach senior high school and the world of work is soon to be their world, a formalized, comprehensive career education

program seems vital to their success as effective and productive members of our society. It is mind-boggling when we realize that there are over 20,000 different occupations in the United States. Although 90 percent of the working population are engaged in less than 100 of these occupations (Holland, 1977), how overwhelming it is for an adolescent to begin to find a place for herself or himself! Career education does not "put" a person in an appropriate place, but rather it helps that person develop self-awareness and self-confidence so that she/he may explore more fully beyond those doors that are open to our young gradustes in the world of work. Career education will certainly not solve all the problems but it will help our students find a "good fit" for themselves. It is not a new idea, since it arrived on the national scene several decades ago (Feir, 1981), and good teachers have been career educators for many years(Westerberg et al, 1982). It must not be confused with the narrow and static vocational counseling that the career theorist, Super, critized; but rather it should be understood as a dynamic and comprehensive program that will enliven our high school students (Super, 1953).

What Educators Can Do

Educators cannot do everything because our schools are institutions with limitations and we are professionals with limited competencies. What we can do is create a curriculum that develops cognitive decision-making and interpersonal skills, because they are foundations for the development of career skills (Feir, 1981). We can be committed to helping our students acquire these skills so that they will have increased satisfaction in their every day living. Satisfaction in living is intrinsically connected

to job satisfaction (Healy, 1982). We can make ourselves more aware of our students who are in the exploration stage of career development. Super (1953) outlines the developmental tasks of this stage as follows:

--- Recognize and accept the need to make career decisions and obtain relevant information.

--- Become aware of interests and abilities and how they relate to work opportunities.

--- Identify possible fields and levels of work consistent with these abilities and interests.

--- Secure training to develop skills and advance occupation entry and/or enter occupations fulfilling interests and abilities.

We can assist our students in developing self-awareness by creating units on self-concept, interests, abilities, values and needs, as part of the social studies curriculum. (Macklin & Hansen, 1981).

Why Infusion Is The Preferred Method

Infusion into the curriculum does not mean that content areas are pushed aside or lessened. Instead, infusion can make the content more relevant for the students. Infusion does mean that career education is integrated into the curriculum on a day-to-day basis. At this time, thousands of infusion lessons have been tried and produced by teachers. Many are available through the National Clearinghouse in Missouri (Healy, 1982). Hoyt calls the idea of infusing career education into instruction in the traditional disciplines "promising" (Hoyt, 1976). Infusion can be done by either targeting conventional lessons as tools to teach career education or redesigning lessons to accomplish the task of traditional objectives and career awareness simultaneously (Healy, 1982).

Why Infusion In Social Studies

Research, in the form of surveys, indicates that families are most influential in the career decision-making of high school students. Teachers, courses and other aspects of school life rank second. Guidance counselors, traditionally expected to be career educators, rank much lower than both these groups (Dickson & Parmerlee, 1980). Obviously, our work as teacher career educators has already begun in the minds of our students. Social studies more than any other discipline deals with the humanity of people and the movement of society throughout the history of the world. It is within the context of social studies that students learn about past conquests, present crises, and predictions about the future. Today, even the most reluctant students understand the ever-present threats to the environment, our national economic problems and the oppression of the third world, all so intense at one moment, a part of history the next. It is in the social studies classes that our young people explore who they are in relation to the on-going creation of history. It is through this that they can learn to find a place for themselves in the world of tomorrow. Some social studies curricula that were examined already give evidence that career education is a part of their course of study (Westerberg, et al, 1982). Joyce (1972) indicates that there are three aspects of education which social studies has an opportunity to influence: intellectual education, personal growth, and social education. Career education is designed to impart these same three aspects of education. In particular, modern curricula offers an opportunity for infusion of career education by offering such courses as sociology, psychology, anthropology, law and economics.

Strategies

In order to formulate a Career Education program to be infused into the social studies curriculum the following suggestions by Kramberg are helpful:

---Set up a volunteer school committee, which includes members of the school faculty and local community. The committee could also include some members of the junior and senior classes for some part of the work.

---To insure success, the school committee must have a clear mandate on the importance of a career education program and a commitment to support teacher training etc. over a projected period of time.

---Obtain strong support from the school administration for work that will not be visible immediately and an understanding that progress is slow during the beginning stages of the program.

---Committee members must take their status as volunteers seriously. They should have a sense of humor as well as a sense of commitment to the school where they work, the administrator and to the students.

Some factors can block implementation of the program, including negative attitudes toward career education, inadequate support from teachers and administrators, too little time and unsystematic approaches to the work to be done (Kramberg, 1980).

In the writing of student objectives, the committee should keep in mind the unique character of their school. Geography, special populations and socio-economic status can effect specifics in the objectives. In general, the student objectives should include the following:

1. To develop heightened self-awareness and self-acceptance.
2. To have as much information as necessary to make decisions as to which type of career they should enter (i.e., education, business, health, etc.)
3. To improve decision-making ability
4. To develop positive attitudes toward work and personal values.

5. To understand the relationship between career goals and personal goals.

6. To develop character traits necessary to be successful in the type of career chosen.

7. To become productive members of society (Cioppa, 1980).

In order to plan a curriculum that increases self-knowledge, the committee establishing the career education program should consult with the guidance counselors. They have specific information on careers as well as ideas to share, suggestions for infusion, and knowledge of programs and resources (Dinkmeyer & Carlson, 1973). In particular, they can be resource people when you are looking at instruments or measures that help increase self-awareness of students. Through the guidance department, you can research the particular tests that seem to be most useful. There are several; including the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory, the Kuder Preference Test, the Self-Directed Search, and the Career Maturity Inventory. Simple classroom activities that would also be helpful and promote discussions are Dickson's and Parmerlee's (1980) Occupational Family Tree.

Simmons (1980) suggests that students be given a career survival skills course with many "how to's" included; such as:

---using the classified section of the daily newspaper
---interviewing for a job
---keep and balance a checkbook
---writing a resume
---weekly and monthly budget
---networking to locate jobs
---secure a loan

Brenneke (1978) feels that consideration should be given to having and raising a family. Students should be made aware of career segregation, know where it exists, and how to cope with it. The world of today

is filled to the brim with sex bias and some of it exists within the classroom. Teachers should examine their own attitudes toward sex bias and it should certainly be a concern of the committee that develops the career education program.

A Plan for Career Education Infusion

The following is a brief outline of a program of career education infusion used by the Foxborough Public Schools in Foxborough, Massachusetts (Kramberg, 1980).

First year:

1. The faculty was invited to "open house" to stimulate faculty interest.
2. A faculty release day was instituted, which involved small group discussion after hearing high level career specialists at a panel discussion. Volunteers were solicited at the end of the day. Committee members had a one day placement in a business or industry.
3. Summer workshops were set up for more intense planning.

Second year:

1. A career education handbook, a resource for all staff members, was produced.
2. The committees again visited a business or industry.
3. A second document was produced, concerned specifically with the infusion of career education in the curriculum.

Third year:

Program was implemented.

A time-line as to "when" "what" should happen is important in designing a program. Nederhelman (1981) suggests that:

--- Students should have a career cluster selected by eighth grade.

--- In ninth grade, the Differential Aptitude Test and results are given to parents and students.

--- In tenth grade the Iowa Test of Educational Development gives the students and parents a report on achievement.

--- In eleventh grade, students look at aptitudes and achievements and reassess their ideas for a career plan.

--- Revisions and plans for further training are discussed.

The student has, by the time she/he graduates a clear picture of personal potential and has been through the process of designing a career plan, a skill the student will be able to use in the future.

As a committee progresses through the planning of a program to infuse career education into the social studies curriculum, more ideas will surface in the literature. Others will be born of the creativity, experience and commitment of the teachers structuring the program as well as those whose task it is to implement it in their social studies classes.

Evaluation should be built in from the very beginning stages of the program, and it should be specific as to the time of evaluation and the method to be used.

Our best criteria for success, however, will be our young graduates stepping out into the world with a clear vision of what can be their future and the precise knowledge of how they can accomplish that future.

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